1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

ments, ritually bores the ears of boys and girls. Formerly, the ritual boring of a boy's ears was an important initiation rite, marking his transition from boyhood to adulthood.

The clothes washed by the washerman (Maḍivāḷa) are not only clean but ritually pure (*maḍi*), and ritually pure clothes should be worn on ritual occasions. The washerman's services are necessary on every ritual occasion. For instance, at a Coorg wedding he has the duty of supplying clean cloths for the bridal pair to walk on, and cloths to cover the ceiling above the bridal seat. He has similar duties at the festival of the village-deity. He also acts as the ritual purifier when a birth or death occurs in a Coorg house. But some Coorgs, especially those in Kiggaṭnāḍ, resort to the Brahmin for ritual purification.

Contact with a barber defiles a Coorg, and every Coorg has a purificatory bath after being shaved by a barber. Such a bath is necessary in order to restore the shaved person to normal ritual status. The barber's services are, however, indispensable at a wedding and a funeral, and shaving is an essential preliminary act for men on ritual occasions.

The Mēda occupies a very low position in the caste hierarchy. He makes artefacts like baskets, fish-traps, and receptacles of cane, *võṭé* reed, and bamboo. He is indispensable at a Coorg festival, dance or hunt, where he beats his tom-tom. The Mēda is a byword for stupidity in Coorg folklore.

The strength of the bond prevailing between the Coorg master and his Poleya servant expressed itself in ritual. Formerly, one or two members of the Poleya servant-family observed ritual mourning for their dead master or mistress. On the day their mourning terminated they were given gifts of cloths and provisions by their masters. The Poleya servants (men) also performed a mourning dance (*anga kaḷi*) in front of the master's house before the corpse was removed to the burial-ground.

At a Coorg wedding, just as the bridal pair are about to leave the bride's house for the groom's, a Poleya servant of the bride's family comes forward, holding a torch in his left hand, while he spreads a cloth before them. The groom throws money, equivalent to a *paṇa* (about three annas), on the cloth. The Poleya then removes the cloth, thus enabling the bridal pair to proceed: contact with a cloth touched by a Poleya defiles a member of a high caste.

Sometimes ritual occasions stress the structural distance that

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must be carried by a member of another *sib* along with that of his own *sib*. It is the *sibs* that are represented at the performance and individuals who dance in the line after the men carrying the staffs are a non-essential part of the performance, carry no staffs, do not wear their dress in the distinctive manner of the *sib*-representatives, and may at any time drop out of the dance which is forbidden for the staff-carriers.[1]

The calendar festivals as well as the festivals of the village-deity emphasize both the solidarity and the individuality of the *okka* in a variety of ways. The games which are a part of some festivals give expression to and canalize inter-*okka* rivalry. All the *okkas* in a village have to co-operate in certain common tasks and games, but even this co-operation is on the basis of the acceptance of the *okka* as the nuclear unit of society. The participation of all the *okkas* in the common tasks stresses not only the unity of the larger groups such as caste, village, and *nāḍ*, but also of the unity and individuality of the participating *okkas*. This is clearly brought out in the dance at Karavalébāḍga.

XVII

Every Coorg *okka* has a relationship of friendship with another Coorg *okka* living not far away. Such friendship is between two *okkas*, and not between the individual members of them. It is traditional and institutionalized. It is usually, though not always, mutual, and the headman and mistress of the friend-*okka* have duties, ritual as well as social, on occasions such as birth, marriage, and death. These duties are in addition to those derived from common membership of the village. (See Chapter II, Section XI.)

It has been stated earlier (see Chapter II, Section XI) that the social stressing of family friendship offset the disadvantage of the lack of any real neighbourhood in a village in Coorg Proper. But isolated as a Coorg *okka* was, it was not completely without neighbours. Only they were not the right kind of neighbours. The Poleya or other low-caste servants of the Coorg *okka* lived in huts near by, but the few small Poleya familie scould not give effective help in beating off a raiding party from another village; and their caste prevented them from participation in the ritual of a Coorg house. They could only do menial jobs and carry messages.

The relationship between a Coorg *okka* and its servant families

[1] 'Kinship and Marriage among the Coorgs', *J.R.A.S.* (Bengal), iv, 1938, p. 124.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

has been considered earlier. The economic part of the relationship was certainly very important, but it was only a part of a total relationship which had several aspects. In Coorg folklore there are instances of a servant's great loyalty to his master, and of the latter's great affection for the former. Achchu Koṭṭa, a Poleya servant of Kallumāḍa Ayyaṇṇa, threw himself on the funeral pyre of his master. Ayyaṇṇa was very ill when a caravan from Bēngūr set out for Malabar, and Achchu Koṭṭa joined this caravan against his master's wishes. Before the caravan had crossed into Malabar, Achchu Koṭṭa heard that his master had died. Torn with grief and remorse, Achchu Koṭṭa ran back to Bēngūr only to see the flames of the funeral pyre consuming the body of his dead master. Without a second thought Achchu Koṭṭa jumped into the fire. The members of the Kallumāḍa *okka* erected a stone in memory of Achchu Koṭṭa outside their ancestor-shrine. When an ancestor-propitiation is held in the Kallumāḍa *okka*, offerings of food and drink are made to Achchu Koṭṭa's stone.[1]

Formerly, a man and woman from the servant family or families observed ritual mourning for their dead master or mistress. The bond between master and servant was strong enough to find expression in ritual.

The *de facto* abolition of slavery by the opening of coffee plantations in the middle of the last century, and the great changes of the last hundred years, have contributed to the weakening of the bond between the master-*okka* and the servant families. But even now, when a Poleya does a piece of work, the mistress of the house gives him a small quantity of castor oil in addition to the wages (*kochchi*), paid in paddy. The application of castor oil to the head is supposed to have a 'cooling' effect on the entire body. Hard work, especially in the sun, brings about 'heat' in the body which needs to be 'cooled' by the application of castor oil to the head. The giving of castor oil by the mistress shows her concern for the health and well-being of the servant: it is an act of friendship.

[1] *Paṭṭōḷē Paḷamé*, p. 364.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

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357
291
481
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A Holeya and his wife.

Photogr. by the Rev. G. Richter — Lith. by E. Kaufmann, Lahr.

[facing p. 112]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

292 the same time gives vent to their vexation at the intractability of these rude mountaineers.

The head with its raven-hair is covered by a white muslin or coloured kerchief, one end of which encircles the forehead and the two corners are joined together at the back, allowing the rest of the cloth to fall gracefully over the shoulders. 301 [556] The wealth of a Coorg family is displayed by the richness of the ornaments of the women. Glass, silver or gold bracelets of a simple description span their wrists; their neck is decked with chains of coral, pearls or gold from which are suspended old Portuguese gold coins. Even the nose and the outer rein[1] of the ears are ornamented with pretty jewellery in gold, pearls and precious stones, and also silver rings are worn on the toes.

292 531 The white festive gowns of the men, as well as the kerchiefs of the women, are skilfully embroidered along the seams and in the corners with red marking cotton and the patterns of native design are often very elegant. The Coorg women esteem their own embroidery more than Berlin work, as the former unlike the latter shows the pattern equally well on both sides.

462 As for industry the Coorg women deserve high praise. They rise early and besides cooking and other domestic work, they bear a large share in the labours of the farm. The men plough the fields, transplant and reap the rice; the women carry manure, weed, fetch home and clean the paddy. The [357] [562] [554] men do no menial work, they leave that to their women and to their servants, whilst they enjoy a dignified repose, discussing the affairs of the house and chewing betel, or stitching a piece of clothing in which art many are as expert as professional tailors, others, gun on shoulder, wander through the jungles in search of game, but the height of their ambition is to figure in the capacity of a Government Official in the administration of their country.

[1] [Errata: This should read "rim". See corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 473--Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

356 The house and yard are generally kept clean and orderly,
574 and the announcement of an approaching honored visitor sets at once the broom into activity and you may arrive just in time to see the retreating Coorg damsel and have to swallow the raised dust. However, the object is attained, you perceive what attention has been paid to you.

312 A stone built deep well is usually in the compound or the
[515] water is fetched from a hole sunk by the side of the paddy-fields, and near the well is the hut for hot bathing.

357 The low caste servants have their huts at some distance
564 from the Coorg house; the meals given them they eat on
361 plantain leaves apart from their masters.

264 As already remarked the Coorg house is the domicile of all the male relatives with their wives and children belonging
591 to one parental stock. The landed property, or Jamma-pámi,
423 is vested in the house and cannot be alienated from it, or
[476] divided amongst its members. The farm is cultivated by all
[241] the housepeople under the management of the master of the house, and the produce is divided amongst them after the Huttari feast. It often occurs, however, that an energetic member of the house or one in Government employment, acquires for himself some fields called Koppa, which are his own, and if sufficient for the support of his family, he may
591 live there and establish a new house. Others own a small
423 coffee plantation or cardamom-garden, and these individual
178 enterprises seem to be the natural transition to an impending general social reform—the breaking up of the great houses, and the independent establishment of each married couple residing near their own paddy-fields, and eating the fruit of their own labour. The indolent will then have to work for their subsistence or sink into misery, the industrious and thrifty will prosper, and after a period of no little angry strife a happier life of personal freedom and domestic felicity will be the inheritance of future generations. The only danger to be apprehended is the tendency of the rich houses absorb-

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

furnished, in the English style, with beds, tables, card-tables, writing boxes, chairs, chandeliers, settees, etc. etc. And there is an old butler of my early Vellore friend, Colonel Ridgway Mealay, and a dozen active servants, who very speedily produce an English breakfast or dinner, served up on handsome Queen's ware, with every kind of European liquor; and what is even still more extraordinary, the cook bakes good bread!

"After all our exertions of this day, it may readily be supposed we slept soundly; and on the morning of the 23rd rose betimes an usual, a custom which I most strenuously recommend to all young men doomed to spend any time in the East, and went to visit the Rájah's stud and elephants; and amongst the latter found a young white one, about two years old, most perfectly formed, with flaxen hair, light eyes, and fair skin. Of these animals, as his country abounds in them, he has great abundance. After breakfast, we were astonished by a visit from the Mahá Swámi, in state. No longer disguised in an European dress, he appeared in his native robes, richly decorated with jewels; and *certes*, in my eyes, he appeared a much handsomer man. He sat a few minutes, and then told us that he had received intelligence of a wild elephant, and would, if we pleased, accompany us to go and shoot him. To us, this was the most acceptable offer he could have made. We retired to prepare ourselves, and our shooting apparatus; and, on our return from our own rooms, found his Highness ready, with elephants and attendants. Away we set, the Rájah himself driving the one I rode, sitting across its neck, with a hook in the right hand and a knife in the other, to cut down any small branches of trees likely to incommode me in the excursion. 'Such a man,' thought I, 'at the head of his followers, must be invincible.' So perfectly different from the effeminate grandeur of most eastern